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VARIETIES OF SPOKEN ENGLISH Workbook

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INTRODUCTION

Varieties of Spoken English is intended for advanced students who need to be able to understand the language as it is actually spoken in a variety of circumstances by a variety of people.

The subject matter ranges from a light-hearted conversation about conjurors, to serious discussions, such as an extract from a seminar on Robert Owen. There are a few 'scripted' texts, including a short story, but the great majority are 'unscripted', that is the unrehearsed, spontaneous use of language by one, two or more people in different situations. No attempt has been made to restrict the language used, so the student may be confident that what he is listening to is 'the real thing'. Two of the recordings were made 'on location', one being an interview between an optician and a patient having her eyes tested, the other being the commentary of a guide on board a launch sailing on the Thames. In some of the recordings there is a central speaker who is able to speak with authority on the subject under discussion: this is the case with the tapes dealing with Robert Owen, Sheep-farming, Ants and Volcanoes. In others there is a kind of 'free-for-all' situation, where a group is simply using language as a form of social, one might say 'sociable', behaviour, and where one person's views or experiences are as good as another's: this is the case in the conversations about camels and a day in the country, for instance.

The participants are as varied as the contents. First they vary as to number: in the short story and the guide's commentary, only one voice is heard; in the conversations there may be as few as two or as many as six. There are young and old, male and female, English, Scottish, American and Australian native speakers, and one or two who have learned English as a second language to near-perfection. There are teachers and students, close friends, and people who had not met prior to the recording session. There are fluent speakers and hesitant speakers, all with their own clearly identifiable speech habits. In the transcriptions, the identity of the speakers in each unit is given, together with a brief indication of the kind of English they use.

The tapes and this workbook can be used either as an independent course, or in association with *A Higher Course of English Study 1* by Ronald Mackin and David Carver, where similar topics are dealt with in a variety of written styles. The study of the two related courses presents to the student, in the most striking way, the main features of, and differences between, the spoken and the written forms of the language. *A Higher Course of English Study 1* is described on the back cover of this book, and readings of the texts are available on 4 tapes. These are referred to as Tape A, in order to establish the relationship between *A Higher Course of English Study 1* and *Varieties of Spoken English* when the two courses are being used concurrently.

The fourteen topics dealt with in *Varieties of Spoken English* correspond, unit by unit, with the fourteen chapters of *A Higher Course of English Study*. Each Unit of *Varieties of Spoken English* is divided into two parts: Part B, which is a recording of a discussion, a story, a seminar, etc., and Part C, which consists of exercises which are mainly related to Part B, though in some cases to Part A also.

Varieties of Spoken English proper consists of fourteen tapes, each containing Parts B and C of one unit, and running for approximately 35 minutes.

This workbook is related to Parts B and C of the units, and contains exercises which

are to be done by the student while he is listening to the tapes. It also contains a complete, detailed transcription of the conversations (etc.) on the tapes, notes on certain difficulties and points of interest in the recordings, and the answers to the exercises on general comprehension, all of which is referred to as the Key. The Key is bound upside down in order to make it inconvenient for the student to refer to it while he is attending to the tape and answering the questions in the workbook. In any case, there is much in the transcriptions that will require explanation by the teacher.

Suggestions for the teacher are given in a special leaflet which is available free from Oxford University Press. They show how *Varieties of Spoken English* may be used either alone or in conjunction with *A Higher Course of English Study 1*.

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UNIT 1B 'THE CONJUROR'S REVENGE'

COMPREHENSION

Listen to the conversation about the story called 'The Conjuror's Revenge'. DO NOT attempt to answer any of the questions below yet.

EXERCISE 1: INTENSIVE LISTENING

The conversation is repeated on your tape. This time there will be pauses in the conversation; answer the questions which are printed below.

Look at this example:

Example:

Well, how (did) (you) like that story?

.....

(Note that in questions like this, where you have to supply the missing words, the line on which you write your answer is a long continuous dotted one. You may have to write one, two or more words on it. In questions like number 2 below you should place a tick (✓) before the correct answer.)

Each time you hear the signal, stop your tape recorder and answer the question. When you start your tape recorder again you will hear the correct answer.

Begin the exercise.

1. Complete: 'Oh, it was very amusing. Leacock's a clever writer, ?'
2. 'He was primarily a mathematician' here means:
 - (a) he was a famous mathematician.
 - (b) he was the first or best mathematician in the country.
 - (c) his main work was mathematics.
3. 'to go hand in hand' here means:
 - (a) to follow one another.
 - (b) to go together.
 - (c) to be similar.
4. What was the last word you heard?
5. Complete: 'Well, I help sympathizing with the conjuror.'
6. 'You couldn't very well sympathize with ...' 'very well' means here:
 - (a) It would be strange if you sympathized with ...
 - (b) You couldn't sympathize very much with ...
 - (c) It wouldn't be right to sympathize with ...
7. 'In spite of the fact ...' here means:
 - (a) because, out of prejudice.
 - (b) although.
 - (c) for the sake of argument.
8. 'should be taken down a peg or two' means here:
 - (a) should be made to admit their feebleness.
 - (b) should be made to look foolish.
 - (c) should be helped down from the stage.

9. Complete: 'Because I the the author calls the Quick Man was basically right.'
10. 'literally' here means:
(a) truthfully.
(b) presumably.
(c) actually.
11. 'pretty' here means:
(a) fairly.
(b) nicely.
(c) delightfully.
12. Complete: 'Oh, I suppose a way you call mystifying.'
13. Complete: 'I can understand feeling puzzled amused.'
14. What were the last two words you heard?
15. The implication of the words 'so many' here is:
(a) a large number.
(b) a specified number.
(c) an unspecified number.
16. 'patter' here means:
(a) clapping of the hands.
(b) fast talk.
(c) tapping of the feet.
17. Complete: '... these trick and things, ?'
18. Complete: 'I suppose you mean producing cards air and that sort of thing?'
19. Ted believes that there are two groups of tricks done by conjurors. One is a group of tricks performed by smooth hand movements. These he thinks are a
20. 'just about' here implies that:
(a) it is my favourite form of entertainment.
(b) it is one kind of entertainment I like.
(c) it is nearly my favourite form of entertainment.
21. Complete: 'Which shows you perverse some people can be.'

EXERCISE 2: GENERAL COMPREHENSION

Listen again to the conversation. Answer these questions by putting a tick (✓) in front of the correct word, phrase or sentence. 'Ted' is the first speaker, and 'Bill' the second.

1. In general Bill (a) *likes* (b) *dislikes* conjurors.
2. He was, (a) *therefore*, (b) *however*, glad that the Quick Man was made to look foolish by the conjuror.
3. (a) *Because of this*, (b) *In spite of this*, Bill thought that the Quick Man was basically right.
4. Bill (a) *thinks* (b) *does not think* that conjurors use crude methods to obtain their effects.
5. He (a) *readily admits* (b) *reluctantly admits* that conjurors' tricks are mystifying.
6. (a) *Nevertheless* (b) *Consequently* he feels cheated when he sees a conjuror performing.
7. Bill objects to the use of specially-constructed gadgets (a) by conjurors who have invented them. (b) by conjurors who have not invented them.
8. (a) He also objects to the kind of things that conjurors say while they are performing their tricks. (b) He also objects to the kind of tapping noises that conjurors make.
9. He (a) *denies* (b) *does not deny* that some tricks require several years' practice . . .
10. (a) *even so* (b) *and that is why* he does not like that kind of trick either; . . .
11. . . . he does not like them because (a) he thinks they are boring. (b) he thinks they are a fraud.
12. The kind of light entertainment that Bill likes best is (a) a comedian who spoils his own tricks. (b) a comedian who spoils another person's tricks.
13. Ted thinks that (a) Bill is perverse. (b) a certain kind of conjuror is perverse.
14. It is (a) *surprising* (b) *not surprising* that Bill found the story amusing.

UNIT 1C

DRILLS

EXERCISE 1

These sentences are recorded on your tape. Listen to them.

There's a BLACKbird in the garden.

There's a BLACK BIRD in the garden.

In the first sentence the word BLACKbird has only one stress and it falls on the first syllable. A BLACKbird is a kind of bird, like a sparrow or a seagull.

In the second sentence the words BLACK BIRD are both stressed. A BLACK BIRD is a bird which is black. If you did not hear the difference clearly, rewind your tape and listen to the examples again.

Words like BLACKbird are called compound words, but some compound words are not written as single words. Some are written in three ways. Here is an example of the spelling of one of these words:

teatime

tea-time

tea time

(The word is always pronounced with a stress on the first syllable.)

In this exercise questions are recorded on the tape. Answer these questions by reading aloud the sentences printed below. Be careful where you place the stresses in the underlined words. Some of these are compound words and some are not.

This example is recorded on your tape. Listen to it.

Model: What was the name of the story?

Student: It was the Conjuror's Revenge.

Model: It was the Conjuror's Revenge.

Student: It was the Conjuror's Revenge.

Now you do the same.

1. It was The Conjuror's Revenge.
2. He took a goldfish out of the bowl.
3. He had a gold ring on it.
4. Yes, he had a doll's cradle, a guinea-pig, a fifty-cent piece and a rocking-chair.
5. No, I said a rocking-chair.
6. It was a famous Japanese trick.
7. To punish the Quick Man.
8. He smashed his gold watch.
9. He hit it with a sledge-hammer.
10. He jumped on the Quick Man's silk hat.
11. No, but I can do the match-trick.

EXERCISE 2

The aim of this exercise is to form nouns from verbs and to pronounce the noun with the correct stress. This example is recorded on your tape. Listen to it.

Model: He suggests we take the car.

Student: I approve of his suggestion.

The verb *suggests*, which was used in the first sentence, provides us with the noun *suggestion*, used in the second sentence. All the sentences in this exercise have the same pattern. The table printed below will help you to remember it.

	his	(suggest) (intend) (revise) (compose) (decide) (react)
	the	(intervene) (describe) (reduce) (invite) (recognize) (subscribe)

EXERCISE 3: REPETITION

I think conjurors should be taken down a peg or two,
because the chap the author calls the Quick Man was right.

I'm not saying the conjuror literally had all those things up his sleeve;
you know, the goldfish in the bowl, all those eggs, the rocking-chair and so on . . .
but what is true is that most conjurors depend on equally crude methods,
and because of this I always feel cheated when I watch a conjuror.

I feel cheated because what I'm really seeing is the manipulation of gadgets . . .
specially constructed boxes, tables, cages and so on.

UNIT 2B LANGUAGE

COMPREHENSION

Listen to the conversation about language. DO NOT attempt to answer any of the questions below yet.

EXERCISE 1: INTENSIVE LISTENING (see the instructions for Unit 1B, page 1)

1. Complete: Some are terribly in the
way speak, you think, Ted?
2. What was the last word you heard?
3. Rewrite 'I ain't never seen nothink like it' in standard English.
.....
4. Complete: 'Oh no, I mean that thing
at all.'
5. 'Let me see' here means:
(a) Let me explain.
(b) Let me think.
(c) Let me look at my notes.
6. 'giving me a lift in his car' here means:
(a) helping me to carry something in his car.
(b) taking me to a place I want to go to in his car.
(c) giving me a ride in his car.
7. Complete: 'Where are you?' 'Why he
just say "Where are you?"'
8. 'bothers you' here means:
(a) is hurting you.
(b) is getting in your way.
(c) you are concerned about.
9. Complete: 'Why do they say when they mean?'
10. Complete: 'Why do they say "different"' when they should
say "different?"

11. Complete: 'Why do they say "..... to" when they should say
"..... to"?'
12. What were the last two words you heard?.....
13. Complete: 'Surely you don't expect me to say "That's enough
which going"?'
14. 'Rather odd' here means:
(a) rather strange.
(b) rather out of place.
(c) not matched.
15. Complete: 'But it correct to put
preposition at end.'
16. Another expression for 'After all' here would be:
(a) At the end.
(b) Everyone knows.
(c) On top of everything.
17. Complete: 'In English the word "preposition" simply identifies a certain group of
..... which or
stand "before something" as you say.'
18. Complete: 'They'd write "That enough
us consider" or "That is enough to occupy our
attention for some time."'
19. 'mixed up' here means:
(a) upside down.
(b) confused.
(c) beside the point.
20. 'For a moment' here means:
(a) at all.
(b) for the present time.
(c) for the sake of argument.
21. 'twisted it' here means:
(a) misrepresented it.
(b) entangled it.
(c) changed it.
22. What does the expression 'going to the dogs' mean here?
(a) becoming brutalized.
(b) being neglected.
(c) changing its character for the worse.

23. Complete: 'I've to now, to my hair cut.'
24. 'There you go again' here means:
 (a) you're doing the same thing again.
 (b) you're going to the barber's again.
 (c) I've caught you again.
25. Complete: 'Surely you mean "Away what are you?"'

EXERCISE 2: GENERAL COMPREHENSION

Listen again to the conversation. Answer these questions by putting a tick (✓) in front of the correct word, phrase or sentence.

- Bill and Ted are discussing (a) only the way some people *speak*. (b) both the way some people *speak* and the way they *write*.
- 'I ain't never seen nothink like it' is (a) a good example of how a badly-educated person speaks. (b) a good example of the careless way in which an educated person speaks.
- So this sentence suggested by Ted (a) *is* (b) *is not* a good example of what Bill means.
- Bill gives Ted an example of what he considers to be careless speech, (a) but Ted does not at first see the point. (b) and Ted immediately sees the point.
- Bill's objection to the use of *to* in the question 'Where are you going to?' (a) bothers and confuses Ted. (b) shows Ted exactly what Bill dislikes.
- Bill's examples of careless speech refer (a) entirely to bad grammar and the wrong use of words. (b) to bad grammar, bad pronunciation and to the wrong use of words. (c) only to bad grammar and bad pronunciation.
- Ted stops Bill and immediately (a) quotes another 'error'. (b) commits another 'error'.
- In the discussion which follows on this 'error', Ted (a) *accepts* (b) *rejects* Bill's definition of a preposition . . .
- . . . and Bill (a) *accepts* (b) *rejects* Ted's statement that he could not say 'That's enough on with which to be going.'
- Bill supports his argument by saying how good writers would avoid the difficulty. Ted (a) *agrees* (b) *disagrees* with Bill because what he says (a) is relevant to the discussion. (b) is not relevant to the discussion.
- Ted (a) *answers* (b) *does not answer* Bill's accusation that he is doing nothing to stop the language from deteriorating.
- At the end of the argument (a) Ted causes Bill to fall into a trap. (b) Bill falls into a trap of his own making.

UNIT 2C

DRILLS

EXERCISE 1

The question of when to use the words *who* and *whom* is one which causes some difficulty. In speech English people usually try to avoid the word *whom*, which tends to sound very formal. In this exercise you will hear a number of sentences in which the word *whom* is used after a preposition, and you must change these to a less formal style, in which the preposition is transferred to the end of the sentence, and *whom* is altered to *who*. In some cases the word which follows the preposition is a different question word (i.e. *what* or *which*); in these sentences you must make a similar change, but the words *what* and *which* remain unaltered, of course.

Listen to the example.

Model: With whom do you live?

Student: Who do you live with?

Model: Who do you live with?

Student: Who do you live with?

Begin the exercise.

EXERCISE 1: PART I.

EXERCISE 1: PART II.

The next four items are rather different because the preposition is not used in your response. That is, you must repeat the question as you hear it on the tape, but omitting the preposition.

EXERCISE 2

This is an exercise in expressing the same idea in different ways. The following sentence is recorded on your tape. Listen to it.

Model: Important as the meeting was, the professor was unable to attend.

The purpose of the exercise is to change this kind of sentence to more ordinary *spoken* English. This can be done in at least two ways. First we can say:

Model: Although the meeting was important, the professor was unable to attend.

Or we can say:

Model: The meeting was important, but the professor was unable to attend.

We want you to change each sentence in both ways. Listen to the example.

Model: Important as the meeting was, the professor was unable to attend.

Student: Although the meeting was important, the professor was unable to attend.

Model: Although the meeting was important, the professor was unable to attend.

Student: The meeting was important but the professor was unable to attend.

Model: The meeting was important but the professor was unable to attend.

Begin the exercise. The first words of your responses are printed below.

1. Useful as the suggestion was, the committee was not able to accept it.

Although the suggestion . . .

The suggestion . . .

2. Difficult as it was to come to a decision, it was necessary to do so immediately.

Although it was difficult . . .

It was difficult . . .